

American Opinion Summary

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PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ON CUBA

Initial comment on President Kennedy's press conference yesterday reflects satisfaction with the President's handling of the Cuban crisis. "Firm courage applied with just the right force for a particular situation" has brought us through a dangerous cold war crisis, the Baltimore Sun holds. The Sun concludes that we "have learned lessons in diplomatic strategy and in moral patience, that should stand us in good stead in other tests before us."

According to Chalmers Roberts, the President "spoke as the Free World hopes its leader would speak: with firmness, but without recklessness" (in Wash. Post).

"The firm position of the U.S., backed by the strength of our armed forces, again has yielded favorable results," the New York Herald Tribune comments.

The crisis is eased, but not over, some writers point out. Castro is seen as a source of continuing trouble. As a Wall Street Journal reporter interprets the President's "progress report," the crisis "has moved decisively away from a direct, potentially explosive" U.S.-Russia confrontation, but "the same old U.S.-vs.-Castro conflict will remain and perhaps even intensify."

The New York Times, after referring to the President's "very great successes of the past month," says that he "correctly" told the people that Khrushchev's statement that the planes would be removed "goes a long way towards reducing the danger." But the Times warns that the problems "caused by the Russian move into Cuba--not to mention the problems caused by the existence of the Castro regime itself--are by no means over" (somewhat similarly, N.Y. Her. Trib.).

Scripps Howard's Washington News asserts that the President's belief that the crisis is passing is reassuring. "even tho it will take further events--rather than promises--to quiet remaining doubts." The Castro regime "will remain with largely uniminished potentiality for trouble," this paper warns. But the Washington Star sees "real progress toward peace in the Caribbean"--and "ground for hope that further progress can be made."

"The atmosphere is immensely favorable" to President Kennedy, Richard A. Loefer wrote for New Yorker before the press conference: "He... has won what is perhaps the greatest personal diplomatic triumph of any President in our history."

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